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### **Working Rules of the Committee for Safety of Agricultural GMOs**

**Report Categories:**

Policy and Program Announcements

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**Report Highlights:**

On May 23, 2013, Department of Science, Technology and Education of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), China's biotechnology regulator, issued the "Working Rules of the Committee for Safety of Agricultural Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)". This is the first time MOA put the requirements on the Committee in writing. Post believes is a measure MOA takes to regulate its GMO evaluation and approval.

This report provides an UNOFFICIAL translation of the Working Rules.

## **General Information:**

### **TRANSLATION BEGIN**

#### **Working Rules of the Committee for Safety of Agricultural Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)**

##### **Article 1**

In accordance with the Regulations on the Administration of Safety of Agricultural Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), members of the Joint Conference Between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce established the Committee for Safety of Agricultural Genetically Modified Organisms (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”), which is responsible for the safety assessment of agricultural GMOs and for providing technical consultations for the safe management of GMOs.

##### **Article 2**

The Committee shall adhere to the principles of science-based and just in conducting a safety evaluation of GMO's..

The Committee will set up a secretariat; day-to-day work of the secretariat shall be handled by the Development Center of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Agriculture.

##### **Article 4**

The members of the Committee shall meet the following criteria:

1. They shall support the routes, guidelines, and policies of the Communist Party of China (CPC), have a high sense of social responsibility, observe regulations and laws, behave decently, and abide by science morality;
2. They shall have one or more of the following professional backgrounds: research in genetic engineering technology, food safety, plant protection, environmental protection, and inspection and quarantine, etc.; they shall be familiar with GMO safety related laws, regulations and knowledge;
3. They shall hold deputy senior (researcher) or a higher level professional title;
4. They shall be healthy, enthusiastic in GMO safety evaluation; they shall be willing to and capable of performing obligations of committee members;
5. They shall be Chinese citizens.

##### **Article 5**

Members of the Committee shall be recommended by relevant government agencies and organizations, and will be subject to MOA selection. Each committee member will hold a 3-year term of office.

## Article 6

### Rights of the Committee members”

1. The right to attend relevant meetings and activities of the Committee;
2. The right to get relevant information and documents;
3. The right to vote;
4. The right to supervise work by the Committee, give criticism and comments.

### Obligations of the Committee members:

1. To observe the national laws and regulations as well as the Working Rules of the Committee, and execute resolutions of the Committee;
2. To attend meetings and activities of the Committee, and guarantee attendance; give comments in a science-based, timely, fair and explicit manner. If a committee member cannot attend Committee meetings due to health problems or other causes, he or she shall get permission (from the secretariat) in advance, give reasons and clarify time of absence.
3. To carry out tasks assigned by the Committee;
4. To keep confidential information secret, to not leak information discussed in meetings;
5. To protect intellectual property rights and keep applicants' technical confidential information secret;
6. To popularize policies and regulations on the GMO management and GMO sciences;
7. To carry out tasks assigned by the Ministry of Agriculture.

## Article 8

If required by safety evaluation, MOA may elect additional members of the Committee.

## Article 9

Should a member of the Committee gets involved in any way in the following circumstances, MOA may relieve him or her of the qualification of committee member or automatically expel the person from the Committee:

1. Failure to meet the requirements for committee member due to changes in circumstance;
2. Failure to carefully perform the obligations as a committee member;
3. Failure to attend the Committee meeting without prior approval;
4. The qualification of committee member will be cancelled automatically if one fails to attend four or more Committee meetings within his or her term of office;
5. One engages in relevant commercial activities in the name of a Committee member, or makes statements in conflict with Committee resolutions.

## Article 10

The Committee sets up the standing panel, professional group, and the review group.

## Article 11

The standing panel's meetings, presided over by the Committee chairman (or vice chairman if entrusted by the chairman), shall be attended by chairman, vice chairman, chiefs and deputy chiefs of the professional groups. In the meetings, attendees shall discuss applications for GMO safety evaluation, and provides technical consultation on major issues about GMO safety between two committee meetings.

## Article 12

The Committee sets up two professional groups, 1) one for plants and microorganisms for plants, and 2) animals and microorganisms for animals. Each professional group has a chief and two deputy chiefs. Professional group meetings, presided over by chief, shall be attended by group members to review GMO safety evaluation applications in the corresponding professional field.

## Article 13

As needed, a professional group may establish review teams on molecule characteristics, food safety, and environmental safety, etc. The convener of a review team shall be designated by the chief of the professional group. The review team's meetings shall be presided over by the convener and attended by team members. The meetings shall conduct preliminary review to GMO safety evaluation applications.

## Article 14

The Committee shall have at least three general assembly meetings each year, in March, July, and November, respectively. The meeting shall be valid with the attendance of two thirds or more of committee members. The standing panel's meeting shall be convened when needed; if necessary, relevant committee members may be invited.

## Article 15

The Committee shall review GMO safety evaluation applications according to the following procedure:

1. Examination as to formal requirements by the Secretariat;
2. Examination by the review team; the review team drafts preliminary evaluation opinions;
3. Competent professional group reviews opinions of the review team. A consensus shall be reached in review; an application shall only pass evaluation with the vote of three-fourth or more committee members;
4. The standing panel makes deliberation concerning the opinion by the professional group.

## Article 16

If necessary, experts in relevant fields may be invited to attend the evaluation meetings to provide

consulting opinions.

#### Article 17

Where any Committee member or his/her relatives have any relationship with the applicant, the member shall not attend review meetings concerning the application in question. Chief of the professional group shall report to Committee chairman in writing of the avoidance in review.

**TRANSLATION END**